



# THE UPDATE

York Pioneer and Historical Society

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## Put on Your Pioneer Spirit: Join us at The Ex!

Dates: Friday, August 15<sup>th</sup> to  
Monday, September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025  
Time: 12:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Daily!  
Location: Scadding Cabin

Since the inaugural Toronto Industrial Exhibition in 1879, the York Pioneers have proudly carried the torch of tradition at the CNE. This summer, we're inviting **you** to help keep that legacy alive!

Whether you're a seasoned volunteer or a first-timer, there's a place for your talents and enthusiasm. Shifts are just 4 hours, and each one comes with a complimentary CNE admission pass – so you can enjoy the fair before or after your time at the Cabin.

Reach out to Kayoko Smith at [yorkpioneers@gmail.com](mailto:yorkpioneers@gmail.com) to match your interests with our summer programming. Check out Page 9 for the full programme calendar.

## Warming up for The Ex? Catch the spirit early at Simcoe Day 2025!

August 4! More volunteers needed! Head to Page 4 for details...



*Above: A bench with a story, a portrait with a legacy – Doors Open Toronto 2025 launches under Simcoe's watchful gaze. Photo: Brent Cunningham*

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## DOORS OPEN 2025: PLAYFUL HERITAGE AT SCADDING CABIN



***Above:** The pun writes itself: doors open on Doors Open 2025 at Scadding Cabin. **Photo:** Brent Cunningham.*

This year's Doors Open theme — "The City is Your Playground: Get Ready to Play" — was on full display at Scadding Cabin, where visitors explored hands-on games and pioneer-era activities.

Across the lawn and table displays, children and adults alike engaged with simple amusements rooted in historical play. A pair of skipping ropes awaited lighthearted competition — humble yet enduring tools of childhood activity dating back centuries. On a nearby table, a Jacob's Ladder toy captured



***Above:** An assortment of toys and games including Jacob's Ladder, dominos, and cribbage each with deep historical roots and familiar to many during the founding era of Toronto in the 1790s. **Photo:** Brent Cunningham.*

curious gazes with its cascading wooden blocks. Known since the early 1800s, this novelty often appeared in households as an approved "Sunday toy," offering quiet entertainment without sound or fuss.

Live matches of Nine Men's Morris drew attention near the Cabin's front steps. This two-player strategy game dates back to Roman times and remained popular in 18th-century Europe, including during the founding years of the Town of York. A game of both logic and leisure, it once helped fur traders pass long winters. Hopscotch also made an appearance on the grounds — its roots in Roman military drills and 17th-century schoolyards making it a fitting nod to play across eras.



***Above:** Hopscotch, with roots in Roman military training and children's games in 17th-century England, hopscotch was a favorite among early families. Easy to set up — requiring only chalk or scratched lines and a marker — it spread across cultures under various names, but always emphasized balance, agility, and play. By the time York was founded, hopscotch was already a childhood staple. **Photo:** Kayoko Smith.*



Both games reflected the event's central theme: joy in simplicity, movement, and shared experience.

Visitors added creative flair through a sketching competition and photo contest, capturing Scadding Cabin's charm in line and lens. One photo featured two participants in an intense match of Nine Men's Morris—a moment that embodies the Cabin's immersive take on history.

Throughout the weekend, Scadding Cabin welcomed **561 visitors**, up from **461 in 2024**, reflecting increased public engagement with this year's heritage programming. While **donations and sales totaled \$157.00**, slightly lower than the previous year's **\$240.25**, every interaction, game, and moment contributed to the Cabin's living legacy. As we prepare for **Simcoe Day** and the **Canadian National Exhibition (CNE)**, the spirit of Doors Open continues to guide our mission forward.



***Left:** An impassioned match of Nine Men's Morris between volunteers Brent Cunningham and David Raymont. Originating as far back as Roman times, this two-player strategy game was widely played across medieval Europe, and remained a common winter pastime among settlers and fur traders in the 18th century. Carved boards have even been discovered in Roman ruins and temples. The game began to fade in the 20th century with the rise of modern board games, but it survives today as a tactile reminder of historical recreation. **Photo:** Kayoko Smith.*

***Right:** One of the standout entries from our young artists: Scadding Cabin in all of its quiet glory! **Photo:** Brent Cunningham.*

## SIMCOE DAY 2025 – WHERE HISTORY COMES TO LIFE

After hosting our very first Simcoe Day celebration in 2024, we were thrilled by the enthusiastic turnout and community spirit it sparked. This August, in partnership with the **Town of York Historical Society** and **Riverdale Historical Society**, we will build on that momentum and bring the buzz to **St. Matthew's Clubhouse** at 450 Broadview Avenue.

There will be live walking tours through local history, a curated display of fascinating artifacts, local authors on-site with their books that bring Toronto's roots to life and representatives from each of the historical societies.

It's a one-day-only affair on **Monday, August 4**, but it sets the tone for the month ahead. Think of Simcoe Day as your pioneer pre-show to The Ex – an easy, low-lift way to reconnect with the York Pioneers' community and get a taste of what's to come at the Scadding Cabin.



**Above:** Richard Fiennes-Clinton (centre) leads the spirited 2024 Simcoe Day discussion, as John Marshall and fellow York Pioneers engage with visitors. Come to share your interest in Toronto history, mark Simcoe Day and join us in PRESERVING THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE AUGUST 2025!

**Photos:** Kayoko Smith.



## VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DAY: SUNSHINE AFTER SPRINKLES AT SCADDING GARDEN

The July 13<sup>th</sup> weather forecast called for umbrellas, but the skies had other plans. By afternoon, the sun broke through, and so did the laughter. Games, quizzes, spirited discussion — and more sweets than a pioneer pantry — filled the garden with cheer.

A meaningful, memorable day at Scadding Cabin, where the clouds cleared and camaraderie bloomed.

A good time was had by all.



*All Photos: Kayoko Smith.*

## STILL ON THE FENCE ABOUT VOLUNTEERING FOR THE CNE OR SIMCOE DAY???

Still thinking about whether you will step forward and volunteer for the CNE or Simcoe Day? Consider Joyce Crooks who has already answered that question the only way she knows how: by showing up!

At 98 years young, Joyce – a longtime active member of both the YPHS and the United Empire Loyalists – raised a flag at this year's Loyalist Day ceremony on June 19. While her act of service may have flown under a different banner, her quiet courage and unwavering commitment to historical community-building remain a shining example of what it means to truly *be present!*

How about you, dear reader and future volunteer? The York Pioneer and Historical Society awaits your call for both events at [yorkpioneers@gmail.com](mailto:yorkpioneers@gmail.com)...



**Left:** At 98, Joyce Crooks stands poised in period dress during Loyalist Day 2025 honours her Loyalist roots during the 2025 flag-raising ceremony – proof that age is no match for dedication. **Right:** The Loyalist flag catches the June breeze – a symbol of heritage carried forward by those, like Joyce, who continue to show up for history. **Photos:** Diane Reid.



## ALARM BELLS! --CALL FOR ASSISTANT EDITORS FOR THE YPHS JOURNAL

The 2025 issue of the York Pioneer is coming along very nicely -- indeed, it is full.

HOWEVER, there have only been a couple of ideas put forth for the 2026 *The York Pioneer* -- but no submissions yet received. **The due date is October 1 2025.**

This is an urgent call for **Assistant Editors** for the 2026 *The York Pioneer*.

- An Assistant Editor will work closely with an author to fine-tune / edit a submission and do some fact-checking (Chat GPT and such submissions won't be permitted!)
- An Assistant Editor will hustle to find authors who will draft submissions in a topic area(s). I am looking for Assistant Editors to find authors in the following topic areas:
  - Agriculture
  - Industry/Buildings
  - Religion / Churches
  - Sports
  - Transportation
  - Education / Schools
  - Political
  - Natural Sites / Environmental
  - Other Social and Economic Institutions

Assistant Editors are de facto members of the York Pioneer Editorial Advisory Committee.

I know you are interested in being an important part of *The York Pioneer* -- one of the longest-running local history journals in Canada. Please email the editor, Bruce McCowan --- [bmccowan@netrover.com](mailto:bmccowan@netrover.com).



*Toronto's tallest landmark rises east of its oldest; a reminder that this city is built on its stories...*

## JOIN OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS AS TREASURER – STARTING 2026!

Are you a budding bookkeeper, accountant, or someone who enjoys working with numbers and community impact? We're seeking a new **Treasurer** to join the **York Pioneer & Historical Society** Board of Directors beginning in early 2026, as our current Treasurer completes her valued term.

This is a fantastic opportunity to:

- Develop your financial administration skills
- Support our respected organization with deep historical roots
- Collaborate with passionate board members

Basic Responsibilities Include:

- Providing a monthly cash flow update at board meetings
- Filing annual income tax and charitable status documents with CRA
- Issuing annual donor tax receipts
- Presenting expenses for Board approval
- Managing the organization's bank account and depositing donations
- Supporting simple bookkeeping and compliance tasks
- Knowledge of bookkeeping principles and accounting software such as QuickBooks is an asset

Whether you're experienced or eager to learn, we'll make sure you're supported. Previous experience is helpful — interest and **commitment** matter most.

Like all Board roles at the YPHS, this is an **unpaid volunteer position**. That said, what you gain in experience, camaraderie, and contribution to history is immeasurable.

Interested? Let us know — we would love to hear from you [paul.litt@sympatico.ca](mailto:paul.litt@sympatico.ca)!



## HAVE YOU CONSIDERED THE YORK PIONEER & HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN YOUR LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT?

As we reflect on the rich history of Toronto, we are reminded of notable figures like Lady Eaton, who left significant bequests in their memory. Such acts of generosity have played a crucial role in preserving our city's heritage.

One of our most cherished landmarks, the Scadding Cabin, has been with us since 1794. It is through the dedicated contributions of our donors that we have preserved this historical treasure for over two centuries. We invite you to help us continue this legacy and ensure the Scadding Cabin remains a vital part of our community for the next 230 years.

Please consider including the York Pioneer & Historical Society in your will. This not only ensures the preservation of historical landmarks like the Scadding Cabin but also offers potential tax benefits in the year of your final tax return. Additionally, we encourage you to inspire friends and family to make donations to the York Pioneers in your memory. Always work with your legal counsel, accountant, and/or financial planner to make the decision that works best for all involved parties, ensuring that your legacy is honoured as you intend.

Whether you choose to make a grand gesture or a more modest contribution, your support is invaluable to us. Together, we can continue to honour and preserve Toronto's fabled history.

Thank you for your consideration and generosity.



## RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY

The 2025 Volume of "The York Pioneer" is about to go to press!

Ensure that you receive your copy by renewing your membership in the York Pioneer and Historical Society today.

Individual membership is an **affordable \$30.00**, with students eligible to join for only **\$20.00**. Or sign up your family for just **\$50.00**.

Send your cheque, payable to "York Pioneer and Historical Society" to:

York Pioneer and Historical Society  
260 Adelaide Street East  
P.O. Box 186  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5A 1N1

or, visit our website at [www.yorkpioneers.com](http://www.yorkpioneers.com), and pay by e-transfer or PayPal.

Don't miss your chance - renew your membership **today!**



## CNE CALENDAR 2025 – SCADDING CABIN

As always, the York Pioneers welcome volunteers and members to join us at the Scadding Cabin during the CNE. The Cabin is open every day of the CNE from **12:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.** Presentations run between **1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.** See below for the list of special events and follow @yorkpioneers for updates:

Fri., Aug 15	Threads of the Past – Spinning: the Original Workout
Sat., Aug. 16	Monarch Butterfly Tagging
Sat., Aug. 16	Pollinators and Pioneers: A Bee Science Event at Scadding Cabin
Sun., Aug. 17	Secrets of Scadding Cabin
Sun., Aug. 17	Threads of the Past – Spinning: the Original Workout
Mon., Aug. 18	Toronto History in Old Books
Tue., Aug. 19	What's the secret link between Scadding Cabin and Toronto's land purchase treaty?
Wed., Aug. 20	Meet the York Pioneer Wagon Men
Wed., Aug. 20	Gardens and the Cabin
Wed., Aug. 20	Threads of the Past – Spinning: the Original Workout
Thu., Aug. 21	Monarch Butterfly Tagging
Thu., Aug. 21	Toronto Guild of Stitchery
Fri., Aug. 22	Quilting: Yesterday and Today
Fri., Aug. 22	Threads of the Past – Spinning: the Original Workout
Sat., Aug. 23	Monarch Butterfly Tagging
Sat., Aug. 23	Market day for a pioneer family!
Sun., Aug. 24	Quilting Chat
Sun., Aug. 24	Toronto History in Old Books
Mon., Aug. 25	Meet the YPHS Archivist at Scadding Cabin
Tue., Aug. 26	What is the message behind the Dish with One Spoon treaty belt?
Wed., Aug. 27	Governor and Mrs. Simcoe Visit
Wed., Aug. 27	History of an Afternoon Tea in the 18th C at the Scadding Cabin with a bill of fare fit for visitors.
Thu., Aug. 28	Quilting: Yesterday and Today
Fri., Aug. 29	Secrets of Scadding Cabin

### SAVE THE DATE:

Please watch our socials and website and your email account for information on a joint event with the **Toronto Fire Historical Society** on **November 2** and the launch of the **2025 York Pioneer Journal**.

The YPHS gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming.